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ACT under the microscope: ABS

The Year 2000 edition of the ACT Year Book, **Australian Capital Territory In Focus**, is an important reference for facts and figures on the Territory and surrounding region and was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

One of the standout features of this edition is a historical timeline detailing major recorded events in the ACT since 1820. This offers a wealth of interesting tidbits including that the earliest known Aboriginal settlement in the ACT was in approximately 21,000 BC.

The Year Book also includes a review of the chapter on government, extra information on the import and export of goods and services to and/or from the ACT, recent service industry surveys and business use of technology.

Some highlights from this year's edition include:

Business and Economy

- In 1998-99, 54 per cent of private sector employment came from small business in the ACT. These businesses grew at an average annual rate of 4.3 per cent per year over the 15 year period 1983-84 to 1998-99 compared to 3.7 per cent nationally.
- In the 12 months to 1998-99 the contribution of Property and Business Services to the Total Factor Income (TFI) in the ACT grew by \$77 million or 6 per cent and is now the second largest contributor to TFI for the whole ACT economy (11 per cent), trailing only general government at 35 per cent.
- All broad retail industry categories showed an increase in retail turnover in 1998-99, however the two main areas of growth were recreational goods retailing (up 19 per cent) and services retailing (up 8 per cent). The contribution by the ACT retail industry Total Factor Income increased by \$113 million (5 per cent) over 1997-98, representing 5 per cent of TFI across all industries in the ACT.
- The ACT also reflected a large proportion of businesses in other service industries particularly market research, security, cleaning, accommodation, serviced apartments, clubs, dental, and physiotherapy services.
- The ACT recorded strong growth in the construction industry in 1998-99 with the total value of building commenced rose by 30 per cent to \$891.8 million, while total value building approvals also rose by more than 30 per cent to \$604.5 million with the value of engineering construction activity rising by 82 per cent to \$268.3 million.

- At the end of June 1999, 83 per cent of ACT businesses reported using a personal computer, 80 per cent used general applications software, and 42 per cent used software designed for the business.
- Over one half of all ACT businesses reported using electronic mail which was much higher than the national level of 37 per cent while 45 per cent of ACT businesses used electronic banking or EFTPOS, also higher than national usage at 34%.

People

- The ACT experienced the third lowest estimated resident population (ERP) growth rate of all Australian States and Territories at 0.7 per cent. Only South Australia and Tasmania had lower growth rates at 0.5 per cent and -0.3 per cent respectively.
- Comparisons between ERP in 1994 and 1999 show that the strongest growth in Canberra has been in the Gungahlin-Hall SSD, with average annual increases of 21 per cent, while the lowest growth was recorded in Weston Creek-Stromlo with a decrease in ERP of 1.2 per cent.
- The ACT apparent retention rate shows 93 per cent of students continuing education through years 7-12 in 1999 compared with a rate of 72 per cent nationally.
- The ACT had the highest home access to the Internet (35 per cent) of all States/Territories compared with 22 per cent nationwide.
- Burglary, fraud and other theft reported to police increased by 14 per cent over 1999. However, burglary alone increased by 42 per cent.
- Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of ACT people aged over 18 years participated in sport or a physical activity compared to the national rate of 59 per cent.

Data is also provided on the Australian Capital Region which extends from Young, Boorowa and Crookwell in the north, to Bombala and the Bega Valley in the south.

Full details are in **Australian Capital Territory in Focus 2000** (cat. no. 1307.8) which is available in all ABS bookshops. If you wish to purchase a copy of this publication, contact the ABS Bookshop in your capital city.

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